

# Sports agencies should look into improving programmes

I REFER to the report, "Learn to survive in open waters" (*my paper*, March 19).

It was reported that the National Water Safety Council (NWSC) would roll out the new and improved SwimSafer programme come July 5, to equip participants with water-survival skills.

This programme will replace the Learn-To-Swim programme targeted at primary-school pupils and will emphasise water safety, teaching children how to survive in open waters and orientate themselves underwater.

The Singapore Sports Council (SSC) is a partner in both SwimSafer and Learn-To-Swim.

It is commendable that the NWSC has worked tirelessly and closely with the SSC to improve swimming programmes targeted at primary-school pupils.

The NWSC showed its dedi-

cation to preventing more drownings by going to Western Australia in 2007 to observe its advances in water-safety efforts, and involving stakeholders in consultations to review the local water-safety system.

I am confident that the new initiative will bear fruit – with children developing greater water confidence and recognising the importance of water safety.

Indeed, knowing how to swim is an extremely useful life-long skill.

It is imperative that the NWSC follows up on its SwimSafer programme by reaching out to more schools, so that more pupils can gain water-safety skills.

To target Singaporeans of all ages, SwimSafer can subsequently be introduced as a family programme, where children can pick up skills with – or under the guidance of – their parents.

Not only will this reach out to more participants, but such a move would also facilitate family bonding.

Other sports agencies and councils in Singapore can learn from the NWSC to gradually introduce new initiatives or revise existing ones.

They can do this through schools, co-curricular activities, or even as independent programmes that can improve physical-education (PE) lessons in Singapore.

With the Youth Olympic Games starting in Singapore in August, it is important not just to heighten sports training for athletes, but also to expose ordinary Singaporeans – especially students – to different sports they can participate in for leisure and exercise.

Such recommendations would certainly be in line with the efforts of the Ministry of Ed-

ucation, which announced recently that there would be more emphasis on PE in primary and secondary schools, with the increase in time spent on PE to be implemented in phases.

The possibilities for sports agencies and councils in making improvements in their areas of interest are endless. Instead of letting the SSC take the lead, they should be proactive and roll out new initiatives.

MR KWAN JIN YAO

## HELPDESK 我的字典

**Commendable:** 值得赞扬的 zhí dé zàn yáng de

**Consultations:** 咨询 zī xún

**Guidance:** 指导 zhǐ dǎo

**Facilitate:** 使便利 shǐ biàn lì

**Leisure:** 闲暇 xián xiá

**Proactive:** 积极主动的 jī jí zhǔ dòng de

## Wireless@SG: More hot spots needed

THE Media Development Authority of Singapore has to make a concerted effort in getting all retail establishments to adopt the Wireless@SG service.

Some outlets may choose not to offer Internet connectivity, but they should reconsider their decision and help make Singapore a completely Web-enabled destination for tourists.

In this regard, perhaps Ikea can follow McDonald's lead.

The tourism board can also include the locations of Wireless@SG services in its complimentary tourist maps and brochures.

MR COLIN ONG TAU SHIEN

## WRITE TO US AT MY PAPER.

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## WIS payouts one way to help workers in training

I REFER to Mr Paul Antony Fernandez's letter, "Help workers in training defray costs" (*my paper*, March 16).

He suggested that the Government consider some form of workfare bonus for mature workers who have been in training for more than three months to help them defray transport and meal expenses.

The Government has put in place various measures to support workers who may need additional help when undergoing training programmes of a longer duration.

Mr Fernandez would therefore be pleased to know that the Government is complementing the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) with the Workfare Training Scheme (WTS).

With the WIS, low-wage workers who have worked for at least three months in a six-month period will receive WIS payouts, even if they have been on training.

Under the WTS, there is the Workfare – Skill Up programme which helps low-skilled workers, unemployed and employed, improve their employability

through literacy and workplace-skills training, and it includes assistance to help defray training-related costs.

Participants of the programme will also be provided with additional counselling and coaching support, customised training pathways based on trainees' preference and literacy level, and dedicated placement efforts after the completion of training.

Additional assistance, relating to training and employment, is also available to unemployed individuals at career centres at community-development councils or the Employment and Employability Institute.

We thank Mr Fernandez for his feedback and hope our workers can take advantage of the various programmes already in place to help them upgrade their skills and take on higher-value jobs.

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## Northpoint linkway still not constructed

LAST July, I wrote about the lack of a sheltered linkway between Northpoint and the bus stop outside.

Mr Lee Kam Seng, senior centre manager of Northpoint, responded then that

construction on the linkway would take place within two months.

However, to date, the linkway has still not been built.

**MS CHUA KIM CHOO**

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